



# Consumer Guide

## Military Service Members and Wireless Phone Service

Are you an active duty military service member paying for wireless telephone service under a long-term plan you're unable to use because of an overseas deployment or transfer?

You may not realize that relief options for men and women serving on active duty in the U.S. military - including reservists called to active duty status - are available through the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA).

### How do I qualify for relief?

Active duty military members who signed long-term wireless telephone service contracts **prior** to receiving orders can, under the SCRA, suspend or cancel their contracts without penalties or extra fees when deployed for 90 days or longer outside of the continental U.S. or when permanently transferred to a new duty station in the U.S. if the change of duty "materially affects:"

- The ability to use the service or
- The ability to satisfy the terms of the wireless telephone service contract

Additionally, service members deployed overseas for more than 90 days may suspend their contracts at no charge until the end of their deployment without being required to extend the length of the original contract term.

### What steps do I need to take?

For example, if the wireless telephone service provider does not provide service in the location of the new duty station and therefore the active duty service member is unable to use the service, then that would be a material change allowing the service member to cancel service, as long as he or she signed the contract before receiving the new orders. Additionally, active duty military members deployed outside of the continental U.S. for more than 90 days may suspend their contracts at no charge until the end of their deployment without being required to extend the length of the original contract term or being required to pay a reactivation fee.

If you have questions about whether the SCRA applies to you, the Department of Justice's SCRA web page ([www.justice.gov/crt/spec\\_topics/military/scra.php](http://www.justice.gov/crt/spec_topics/military/scra.php)) recommends you contact the nearest Armed Forces Legal Assistance Program office. You can use the military legal assistance office locator (<http://legalassistance.law.af.mil/content/locator.php>) to find the nearest location and contact information for each branch of the armed forces. Dependents of service members may also contact or visit military legal assistance offices.

For more information from the DOJ on service members' rights, visit [www.servicemembers.gov](http://www.servicemembers.gov).

### More about SCRA

The SCRA is a federal law that provides protections for military members as they enter active duty. In addition to wireless telephone service, it covers issues such as rental agreements, security deposits, prepaid rent, eviction, installment contracts, credit card interest rates, mortgage interest rates,



mortgage foreclosure, civil judicial proceedings, automobile leases, life insurance, health insurance, and income tax payments.

### More FCC consumer guidance

- International Roaming: Using Your Mobile Phone in Other Countries: <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov/hc/en-us/articles/205335590-International-Roaming-Using-Your-Mobile-Phone-in-Other-Countries>
- Surcharges for International Calls to Wireless Phones: <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov/hc/en-us/articles/206533003-Surcharges-for-International-Calls-to-Wireless-Phones>
- Understanding Wireless Services and Billing: <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov/hc/en-us/articles/202664664-Wireless-Services-and-Billing>

### Consumer Help Center

For more information on consumer issues, visit the FCC's Consumer Help Center at <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov>.

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